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Complete Transition In Store for CIA

By CHARLES BARTLETT
Contributing Writer

President Kennedy and his officials have gone to great lengths in dealing with CIA Director Allen Dulles' impending retirement to avert any implication that his withdrawal to private life is tied to the failure of the Cuban invasion.

Mr. Kennedy and his top officials are keenly conscious of Mr. Dulles' impressive qualities as a man, his deep experience in intelligence affairs, and his long service to the Government. The Cuban affair was a compound of many errors in many quarters and Mr. Dulles could not in justice depart Washington as the scapegoat.

He is however 68, and during his tenure as the first civilian director of the CIA, the agency has developed its original advisory role into a close involvement with the policy functions of foreign relations. Many feel that this development came as a consequence of the kinship of Allen and Foster Dulles and many feel that the CIA should be returned as quickly as possible to a purer role of intelligence collection.

Amid this sentiment, crystalized by the events in Cuba, there is a certain impatience on the part of the new administration to gain the full control of the CIA which can only be obtained by replacement of the upper echelon. Mr. Dulles in departing is apt to be accompanied by the deputy director, Gen. C. P. Cabell, and the chief of operations who was directly in charge of the Cuban landings, Richard Bissell. Changes are already underway in the agency and more are planned when the new officials take hold.

Appraising the CIA

Assessments of the CIA vary and there is no way to rate its performance. Many of those who have been with it over a long period believe that its operations and personnel are better now than they have ever been. There is little disposition to maintain that the agency, because of Cuba and the U-2 incident, has fallen upon dark days. There is a broad feeling however that whatever its asset value, the CIA has become something of a public embarrassment to the United States in the wake of these incidents.

The actual existence of this agency, with its roster of about 30,000 persons, is a startling departure from United States traditions. George Washington had a zest for spies and developed a [illegible] nicated with elaborate subtlety. He spent something like $17,000 on espionage in the course of the Revolutionary War.

But the tendency of the United States Government through the years has been to regard the moral justice of the democratic system as sufficient to stand against the more decadent tactics of the European governments. The American Black Chamber, the Army's cipher bureau, was treated like a clubroom for cabinet members during World War I and the War Department closed it in 1929 amid a general sentiment that its activities were as immoral as reading other people's letters. The State Department shrank from the use of diplomacy for spying until 1940 when the OSS was established to avoid the friction that was apparent between the services on intelligence matters. The OSS, manned by men like Mr. Dulles and Gen. William J. Donovan, had a lively and impressive record of war activity.

Wartime Success

Its success in wartime plus growing concern over Communist tactics were two principal factors in the establishment of a permanent independent intelligence agency in 1946. The organization began with an invitation by President Truman to the State, War and Navy Departments to furnish personnel for a centralized operation. It functioned without statutory basis for 20 months until the National Security Act of 1947 gave it full legitimacy and its present name.

Since then the CIA has maintained a shadowy existence and constant growth. Its appropriations have been handled by silent subcommittees of Congress whose members have been dogged in obscuring the size and scope of the expenditures. There have been occasional moves for a joint congressional committee to supervise intelligence activities but these have been stoutly resisted by Mr. Dulles, whose warm and reassuring personality brought him far more popularity with the legislators than his brother ever enjoyed.

It is not clear—and the public may never know—what changes are currently contemplated in the CIA operations but the plans which stemmed from the survey by Robert Kennedy and Gen. Maxwell Taylor and the board headed by James Killian have sufficed to stem congressional discontent in recent weeks. It is clear that the agency, with its new leadership, will move shortly into a new phase of its [illegible] existence.